BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC STATS Infoline

Issue: 97-38 6 Pages
September 19, 1997

tel (250) 387-0327
fax (250) 387-0329

You will find the last 5 issues on our website:
http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca

highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

Consumer Prices

- **For the fourteenth time in the last sixteen months, British Columbia has had the lowest inflation rate in the country.** The province's Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose 1.1% in August. Nationally, the CPI was up 1.8% over August 1996, with the largest increases occurring in Newfoundland (2.3%), Nova Scotia (2.3%) and Ontario (2.2%). Saskatchewan (1.2%) and PEI (1.4%) were the only provinces other than BC to have an inflation rate of just over one percent.

  Lower shelter costs (-1.2%) continued to be a major factor in the slow growth of the province's CPI. In addition, moderate gains in the cost of recreation and reading materials (0.6%) and health and personal care (1.1%) helped offset a 3.3% increase in average prices for food and a 2.9% rise in the cost of alcohol and tobacco products. Year-over-year price increases in BC were below the Canadian average for all major categories except food and household operations.

  Source: Statistics Canada

- **Among census metropolitan areas, residents of Vancouver (0.9%) and Victoria (1.3%) continued to enjoy some of the lowest overall price increases in Canada.** Vancouver had Canada's lowest inflation rate, while Saskatoon (1.0%) and Regina (1.2%) were the only other cities where the CPI increased less than in Victoria. Thunder Bay (2.4%) and Toronto (2.3%) had the highest inflation rates in the country.

  Source: Statistics Canada

The Economy

- **Retail sales in British Columbia increased 3.1% to $2.7 billion (seasonally adjusted) in July.** Nationally, sales were up 1.3%, with PEI (5.7%), Nova Scotia (4.1%) and BC recording the largest gains. Manitoba (-3.0%), New Brunswick (-2.4%) and the Northwest Territories (-0.9%) were the only regions where sales declined.

  Year-to-date, sales in BC were up 4.5% over the first seven months of 1996, despite considerably volatility during the first half of the year. Canadian sales rose 7.4%. Year-to-date sales increased significantly in Alberta (13.5%), Yukon (10.3%) Quebec (9.7%) and Saskatchewan (9.4%). *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Wholesale sales rose 3.8% (seasonally adjusted) in July.** The increase in BC was well above the national average (2.1%) and the second highest in the country, after Prince Edward Island (9.0%). Sales were up in all parts of the country except Nova Scotia (-5.2%), Saskatchewan (-1.9%) and Manitoba (-1.2%). *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Pulp and paper production in British Columbia was 8.8% higher in the seven-month period ending in July than in the same period last year.** Paper and paperboard production was up 5.2%, and market pulp production rose 11.1%. Ninety percent (4.1 million) of the 4.5 million tonnes of pulp and paper shipped by BC producers so far this year were exported.

  Source: Canadian Pulp and Paper Association

Report **Let's hear from you–Subscriber Survey and Index**

Did you know...?
Shoppers in Tokyo pay an average $754 (US) for a basket of food that would cost $288 in Toronto. Zurich ($551) had the second-highest food prices. The same basket would cost only $176 in Warsaw and $167 in Bombay.

- **The value of BC product exports was 10.4% lower in July than in the same month last year.** The decline was largely due to lower exports of forest products (-14.5%), which account for the bulk of BC's exports. Exports of agriculture and fish products, automotive products and industrial goods were also down from a year earlier. However, energy exports recovered from three months of declines to grow 6.4% in July and machinery and equipment and consumer goods exports remained stronger than in 1996. Nationally, exports rose 4.8% in July.

  Year-to-date, BC's exports were up 7.1% from the first seven months of last year. The strongest gains were in value-added products such as consumer goods, machinery and equipment, industrial goods, and automotive products. Forest product exports grew more moderately. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **There were 649 consumer and 93 business bankruptcies in British Columbia in June.** The number of bankruptcies in the province was 10.7% higher than in the same month of 1996. This compares to an 11.1% increase at the national level, with 7,095 consumer and 977 business bankruptcies reported in June.
  Source: Industry Canada, Bankruptcy Statistics

Travel and Tourism

- **In July, 262,000 Americans made same-day car trips to British Columbia, an increase of 9.6% from the same month of 1996.** Nationally, the number of same-day car trips from the US to Canada was up 5.5%. Same-day trips to BC from the States have been rising, increasing 6.7% year-to-date. Americans have made 1.4 million same-day trips to the province since January. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Hotel occupancy rates in the province averaged 78.2% in June, down from 81.3% in the same month last year.** The average cost of a hotel room was $120.39, compared to $111.07 in June 1996. *Source: Pannell Kerr Forster*

- **BC Ferries carried 2.2% fewer vehicles and 1.6% fewer passengers this August than in the same month last year.** Year-to-date, passenger and vehicle traffic were both down 2.5% from the first eight months of 1996.
  Source: BC Ferries

Environment

- **Between 1990 and 1995, carbon dioxide emissions from motor vehicles in BC increased 24% to about 14 million tonnes per year.** However, the level of greenhouse gas emissions has fluctuated during the period since 1980, ranging from about 11 to 14 million tonnes per year. Greenhouse gas emissions declined marginally between 1980 and 1990.

  In the Capital Regional District, greenhouse gas emissions from the Hartland Landfill are estimated to be equivalent to the emissions of between a quarter and half of all the cars in the region.
  Source: CRD Roundtable Report on the Environment

Alcohol Sales

- **During the three-month period ending in June, the Liquor Distribution Branch sold 69.5 million litres of beer.** While total beer sales were down 3.3% from the previous year, sales of imported beers continued to increase, rising 10.7% to 3.0 million litres. Mexican beers commanded the largest share of the import market: 904,000 litres. American beers were a close second (900,000 litres), followed by beers from Holland (305,000 litres) and Germany (278,000).
  Source: Liquor Distribution Branch, Quarterly Market Review

Women in the Work Force

- **In the 1950s, only 8% of women returned to work within two years of the birth of their first child.** By the 1990s, more than half (56%) of women were back at work less than two years after their first child was born. During the same period, the percentage of women who held a job prior to starting a family rose from 63% to 85%.
  Source: SC, Social Trends, Autumn 1997

For data originating from Statistics Canada: data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the publication name or catalogue number.

Did you know...?
Shoppers in Tokyo pay an average $754 (US) for a basket of food that would cost $288 in Toronto. Zurich ($551) had the second-highest food prices. The same basket would cost only $176 in Warsaw and $167 in Bombay.

- **Among Canadian adults surveyed in 1995, 64% of women and 86% of men said that being able to have a paying job was important or very important to them.** Fifty-five percent of women, and 49% of men agreed or strongly agreed that having a job is the best way for a woman to be independent. While 59% of men and 67% of women said that an employed mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work for pay, more than half (59% of men and 51% of women) agreed or strongly agreed that a pre-school child is likely to suffer if both parents work.

  Source: SC, Social Trends, Autumn 1997

highlights, Issue 97-38
September 19, 1997

Infoline Subscriber Survey - September 1997

1	How many people in your organization see your copy of ***Infoline***? Check (✓) one circle.	Just one ○	2 to 4 ○	5 or more ○
2	Have you visited our Web site or contacted us to follow up a topic that piqued your interest? Check (✓) one circle.		**No** ○	**Yes** ○
3	Which part(s) of ***Infoline*** do you find useful? Check (✓) one circle **in each row**.	**Not useful**	**Useful**	**Very useful**
	highlights	○	○	○
	Report	○	○	○
4	How could we improve ***Infoline*** to better meet your requirements? Check (✓) one circle **in each row**.	**Delete**	**Shorten**	**Keep**
	highlights	○	○	○
	Report	○	○	○
	last page	○	○	○
5	Have you purchased materials from us as a result of ***Infoline***? Check (✓) one.		**Yes** ○	**No** ○

6 The single line that the faxing software places at the top of each page permits us to add a name or phrase particular to your organization. If you would like a **different** name than currently appears, please provide a new name. Also, we need your fax number to find your listing.

new name	
fax number	

7 Please comment on our services and/or products. We need your feedback to maintain and improve service to our clients.

Thank-you!

FAX BACK to: (250) 387-0380 or (250) 387-0329 (in Victoria)

Infoline

1997 Index (to Sept 19/97)

Find the last 5 issues on our Website http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca

Jan 3 ..... BC Has Biggest Stake in Team Canada Mission
Jan 10 ... Retirement in British Columbia
Jan 17 ... Low Income Rates in BC
Jan 24 ... Team Canada's Mission to South Korea, the Philippines & Thailand
Jan 31 ... BC Products Find Better Markets Abroad Than in Canada

Feb 7 ..... English Language Ability of Recent Immigrants
Feb 14 ... Measurement Biases in the Consumer Price Index
Feb 21 ... Highlights from *British Columbia Economic Accounts, 1986-1995*
Feb 28 ... Service Exports - Shipping & Professional Service Industries Bring in More Overseas Revenue

Mar 7 ..... Women's Labour Market Participation
Mar 14 ... Have Income Redistribution Programs Been Working? Yes and No . . .

Mar 21 ... Employment in tourism-related Industries 1984-1996
Mar 27 ... Changes in Business Confidence Expressed in Numbers of New Incorporations

Apr 4 ..... Earnings of Men and Women
Apr 11 ... BC Migration - Outlook for 1997
Apr 18 ... 1996 Census Highlights
Apr 25 ... BC Wood Product Exports Lose US Market Share to Other Provinces

May 2 .... Proposed New Immigrant Investor Program
May 9 .... The Genuine Progress Indicator: A Better Measure of Progress? (Part 1)
May 16 ... The Genuine Progress Indicator: A Better Measure of Progress? (Part 2)
May 23 ... Work Sharing - Might This Be a Solution for BC's High Unemployment Rate?
May 30 ... Imports Catch Up to Exports, As Trade Surges in 1990s

Jun 6 ..... No feature report this week
Jun 13 .... The Size of the Underground Economy
Jun 20 .... Highlights from the Youth Smoking Survey
Jun 27 .... The British Columbia High Technology Sector, 1988-1995

Jul 4 ..... BC Prime-Age Males - Are they becoming "Stay-at-Home Dads"?
Jul 11 ..... Major Projects in British Columbia
Jul 18 ..... Europe Imports Less from BC, Finds Resources Closer to Home
Jul 25 ..... Immigrants Boost Self-Employment in British Columbia

Aug 1 ..... Regional Population Projections
Aug 8 ..... Immigration From Hong Kong After the 1997 Handover
Aug 15 ... With Hong Kong, China Becomes Third Largest Export Destination for Western Provinces
Aug 22 ... Hot off the press!
•'97 BC Manufacturers' Directory
•Socio-Economic Statistical Profiles of BC Regions
Aug 29 ... The Value of Education - It really pays to stay in school

Sep 5 ..... Canadian Building Product Exports Climb as Japanese Regulatory Barriers Fall
Sep 12 ... Sub-Provincial Employment Outlook for British Columbia
Sep 19 ... Subscriber Survey issue

BC STATS, Min. of Finance & Corporate Relations, Box 9410 Stn Prov Govt, Victoria, B.C. V8W 9V1
Tel: (250) 387-0327 Fax: (250) 387-0329 Web: http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca E-mail: BCSTATS@fincc04.fin.gov.bc.ca

Infoline

September 19, 1997

fax transmission information service from **BC STATS**

also on the Internet at http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca

BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Apr 1/97	% change on year ago
BC	3,915.9	2.2
Canada	30,202.9	1.1
GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT		% change
(BC - at market prices - $ millions)	1996	on year ago
Current Dollars	103,631	1.7
Constant (1986) Dollars	74,001	1.0
TRADE ($ millions)		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) Jun	2,811	4.5
Merchandise Exports (raw) Jul	2,190	-10.4
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Jul	2,706	3.9
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		% change
(all items - 1986=100)	Aug '97	on year ago
BC	139.9	1.1
Canada	138.2	1.8
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change
(seasonally adjusted)	Aug '97	on year ago
Labour Force - BC	2,029	2.1
Employed - BC	1,856	2.8
Unemployed - BC	172	-5.0
		Aug '96
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	8.5	9.1
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	9.0	9.5
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Sep 17/97	Sep 18/96
Prime Business Rate	4.75	5.75
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	5.65	6.13
- 5 year	7.00	7.95
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Sep 17/97	Sep 18/96
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $	1.3885	1.3718
US $ *(reciprocal of above rate)*	0.7202	0.7290
AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS		% change
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Jun '97	on year ago
BC	620.87	0.2
Canada	603.05	1.8

SOURCES:
Gross Domestic Product: Statistics Canada, revised by BC STATS
Population, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Earnings: Statistics Canada
Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

Subscriber Survey Issue

Please complete the questionnaire in this week's broadcast and return it to us by fax. We really do react to our clients needs and have made several changes to Infoline over the years in response to your suggestions.

Released this week by BC STATS

- Tourism Room Revenue, May 1997
- Earnings & Employment Trends, June 1997
- Small Business Quarterly, 2nd Quarter 1997

Next week

- Consumer Price Index, August 1997
- Business Indicators, September 1997
- Current Statistics, September 1997

BC STATS, Min. of Finance & Corporate Relations, Box 9410 Stn Prov Govt, Victoria, B.C. V8W 9V1
Tel: (250) 387-0327 Fax: (250) 387-0329 Web: http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca E-mail: BCSTATS@fincc04.fin.gov.bc.ca